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President Emeritus George Lynn Cross by Joseph Sigall 1949.

A Presidential Gallery

For William Slater Banowsky to conduct the business of the University of Oklahoma under the watchful eyes of his nine presidential predecessors could be comforting at times, but also rather unsettling. From his desk he can see them all, lining the walls of his Evans Hall office, offering mute testimony to the historic events which shaped the successes and failures of their administrations.

To those who never knew these men as presidents, the portraits have contributed an artist's view of their personalities as well as their appearances. The portrait of David Ross Boyd, dignified and aristocratic as it may seem, lacks the ministerial austerity of the likeness of

Arthur Grant Evans, while the businesslike Stratton Duluth Brooks has the appearance of a sincere but successful local banker. James Shannon Buchanan's portrait, showing a dour, severe man, seems inconsistent with his recorded reputation as the personable activist, "Uncle Buck," but William Bennett Bizzell comes through as the benign, scholarly gentleman he was reputed to be.

The casual, tweedy Joseph August Brandt retains the air of the newspaperman/publisher that he was, in contrast with the more formal representation of the firm-jawed, steady-eyed George Lynn Cross. There is something slightly ironic in the penetrating gaze of John Herbert Hollomon, while the portrait of Paul Frederick Sharp

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*Artist Andre Dugo was Joseph A. Brandt's choice for his
1949 portrait commissioned by the board of regents.*

reflects the genial, smiling distinguished professor he is to
this day.

The presidential portrait tradition began as a tribute
to the politically ousted David Ross Boyd, a gift from the
Class of 1908, instigated by the late Errett Newby, a
member of the class who served the University until 1919,
first as secretary to President Evans, then as registrar
under President Brooks.

The next four portraits were the work of the multi-
talented Patricio Gimeno, who came to OU as an instruc-
tor in art in 1911 and remained as professor of Spanish
until shortly before his death in 1940. Strangely, Gimeno
did not paint his four presidents in order, completing OU's
third president, Brooks, in 1918, the second president,
Evans, in 1927, the fifth president, Bizzell, in 1928 and
the fourth president, Buchanan, in 1930.

With the exception of President Emeritus Sharp, who
is still a full-time faculty member, Brandt is alone among
the past presidents in having nothing on the campus or in
the city Norman named in his honor. So perhaps it is
fitting that he alone has two presidential portraits.

The first was commissioned by the OU regents from
an artist of Brandt's choice, Andre Dugo of Suffern, New
York. The resulting portrait, delivered in March 1949,
was nearly as controversial as the Brandt administration
had been.

Brandt's portrait was in startling contrast to those of
his predecessors. Brandt was an attractive man, but the
untrained eye could find little of his youthful good looks in
Dugo's work.

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*In 1982 a second Brandt portrait was completed by
Raymond Everett Kinstler to hang with the past presidents.*

Reluctantly, the regents accepted the portrait after
being assured that Brandt was completely satisfied. Thirty
years later, when a subsequent board of regents
commissioned another New Yorker, the renowned por-
traitist Raymond Everett Kinstler, to paint former presi-
dents Hollomon and Sharp, they requested that he also
execute a second portrait of Brandt, which appears on the
cover of this issue of *Sooner Magazine*.

The portrait of George L. Cross evoked no such artis-
tic controversy but did cause some discomfort to OU's
seventh president. In 1948, when he was still in office,
the regents instructed Cross to commission his own portrait
to be hung with the past presidents. Cross obediently did so,
selecting European-born portrait painter Joseph Sigall of
Tulsa, who delivered the portrait in the fall of 1949 at a
cost of \$1,200.

Some time later, Cross was called before a state sen-
ate investigating committee to explain "waste" of state
funds at the University, in particular the purchase of a
charcoal brazier and a set of earrings from an ancient
Egyptian tomb, which one senator had interpreted as
"earrings and brassieres." Somewhat mollified by Cross'
explanation, the senators then asked him to justify spend-
ing \$1,200 on his portrait. The unflappable Cross replied
that presidential portraits normally are done only once,
and if the regents didn't change presidents too often, the
cost could be amortized over a period of time.

Apparently the regents took the hint, retaining Cross
in office for 25 years, reducing the portrait expense to \$48
per year.

– CJB